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Teaching and learning entrepreneurship for micro and small businesses in the cultural industries sector

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Abstract

Reports on an ESRC-funded, in-depth qualitative research project into 50 micro and small enterprises (MSEs) in the cultural industries. Our evidence sheds light on the extent to which the teaching and learning strategies adopted by higher education, further education and other VET providers are effective in providing entrepreneurship education and training for this innovative, high skill sector. Our findings suggest that entrepreneurs in this sector learn best by being able to experiment with ideas, by “doing” and networking with others and by working with more experienced mentors in their sector. The article concludes by suggesting a more “naturalistic” approach to teaching and learning entrepreneurship for micro and small businesses in the cultural industries sector.

Introduction

Numerous Government White Papers on competitiveness (Department for Trade and Industry (DTI), 1994, 1995) have confirmed the importance of innovative entrepreneurship and the development of micro and small businesses in revitalising the economy through periods of post-industrial transformation. In particular, the high knowledge intensive, high value added, and high-tech end of the SME sector is now seen as providing important impetus for the UK's policy drive towards breaking a low skills equilibrium that has dominated the national economy for decades (Fox, 1974; Finegold and Soskice, 1988). The development of this sector is, therefore, seen as representative of, and synonymous with, economic shifts that have been variously described as being from the industrial to post-industrial, from Fordism to

post-Fordism, from a low skill to a high skill economy or a shift to the informational economy (Castells, 1996). Although this much vaunted shift has its critics (Keep, 1999), it is clear that Government policy, through reports such as the DfEE's UK Employment Action Plan 1999, believes in the shift and, in rhetoric at least, is committed to supporting those sectors that both represent and champion these shifts. The DTI and the DfEE are, therefore, keen to see the expansion of entrepreneurship in innovative and high performing SME sectors and are developing various initiatives to encourage them[1].

Promoting entrepreneurship continues to be a key policy objective. In particular, a dynamic small business community is crucial in making the UK a more enterprising nation where innovators and those prepared to take risks are encouraged. Within the context of an expanding SME sector, our key priority is to encourage more high-growth businesses, as these are the chief drivers of wealth (DfEE, 1999).

Given this current emphasis, our paper seeks to examine the extent to which the teaching and learning of entrepreneurship provided by higher education (HE), further education (FE) and other vocational education training (VET) organisations is effective both in terms of creating and communicating appropriate pathways into these sectors and then supplying the necessary guidance, support and training for entrepreneurs once established. In order to do this, our paper will examine, in case study format, the cultural industries[2] as a sector of the economy that many commentators have recognised (O'Connor, 1999; Lash and Urry, 1994; Castells, 1996) as experiencing above average growth, as providing an important opportunity for new careers in an age when traditional manufacturing is in decline and as representing, in the clearest terms possible, an important example of post-industrial, post-Fordist and high skills entrepreneurial working practices. Our ESRC-funded, in-depth qualitative research[3] into 50 micro and small businesses in the cultural industries provides the evidence and sheds light on the extent to which the teaching and learning strategies adopted by HE, FE and other VET providers are effective in providing entrepreneurship education and training for this innovative, high skill sector.

This article is divided into a number of sections. We will first outline briefly the sample and methods used to investigate this sector, followed by an outline of our main findings from the research and the theoretical explanations that provide us with a way of understanding the data. We conclude with some tentative guidelines for improving the approaches used by HE, FE and other VET providers in their development and support of entrepreneurship for this SME sector.

The experience of learning entrepreneurship

Using contacts built up over the past five years and augmented by a recent city-wide study of cultural production and policy (O'Connor, 1999), we were able to access the shifting networks of cultural industries in the city and secure interviews with 50 cultural MSEs. These took the form of in-depth informal interviews that lasted between one and two hours and attempted to draw out biographical detail as well as a specific understanding of business practice in this sector.

The businesses were recruited from three sectors:

1. (1) fashion design;
2. (2) the night-time economy; and

3. (3) “new media” industries associated with information and communication technologies (ICTs).

While drawing on our past involvement with these sectors they also provided three distinct but overlapping fields.

1. (1) Fashion design and retail provided clear links with a historically significant sector of the regional economy.
2. (2) The night-time economy again provided continuity and an opportunity to explore practices in a sector at the cutting edge of the more conspicuous urban transformations.
3. (3) New media and ICTs are an emergent sector in the city and are dynamic and increasingly cross sectoral.

Our research asked a number of questions that aimed to elucidate those elements of entrepreneurship education and training that helped entrepreneurs in the cultural industries develop their business knowledge, understanding and skills. The questions asked included:

- What further, HE and other VET did you engage in and to what extent did it encourage and then help in setting-up and running your business?
- What business support and training did you receive in setting up and then running your business and how effective was the training and support?
- What learning experiences seemed to provide you with the greatest insights into running your business?
- What type of training and support do you think might have benefited the setting up and future running of your business?

We take each of these in turn.

Experiences of FE and HE

In examining the background learning that most cultural entrepreneurs brought to their business, we see that both further and higher education are, in various ways, influences on their thinking. Some entrepreneurs completed arts based BTEC, undergraduate and postgraduate degree courses and these contexts provided them with a “safe” environment to develop creative ideas – ideas that became a guiding force for future business activity.

It was a media degree but it split into two halves, half of it was audio-visual, people studying television and half of it was print journalism. I did print journalism and with that it was more specialised like you did sections like cultural society and you know, some specific subject like that you could choose. Interviewer: are any of the skills that you learnt on that course transferable to what you do now? Not necessarily the actual vocational skills like editing and subbing, more the sort of subjects like cultural society, sexual representation stuff like that, which helps you to analyse stuff and develops your thinking rather than your actual professional skills (interviewee 12, journalist).

However, there were also some experiences of arts-based FE and HE courses that seemed to provide little in terms of the development of appropriate technical skills required for specialist labour markets, particularly when contrasted with the learning opportunities of working in a thriving specialised micro business:

... I used to go to Wigan Tech and did a BTEC in fashion and from that did the course at Hollins (Manchester Metropolitan University). That was more of a technical course and I thought it would be really good. When I was at Hollins I did absolutely sod all and didn't go to college very often and I met somebody in the first six months of me being there who I did a placement with. He was a tailor, and I did an apprenticeship in tailoring. he's just finished a four year course at Hollins and he now works in London I learnt a hell of a lot about pattern cutting and a lot about garment development and shape development. I made a lot of contacts in Manchester because the people I was working with weren't from college, they were older than me and knew a lot of people. I met a lot of people doing fashion shows and things like that and basically made a lot of contacts in clothing and related industries in Manchester. When I started my work placement I realised how much I could learn from him in relation to how much I wasn't learning at college (interviewee 25, fashion designer).

Courses that provided individuals with room to develop particular interests and skills seemed to be highly valued by some entrepreneurs – particularly when it provided them with innovative approaches and techniques for future career development

What did you study at college [interviewer]? Interactive media design at the [Manchester] Poly. The course wasn't originally set up as an interactive media course, it was kind of you solved educational problems using whatever technology you want to ... it wasn't necessarily educational in terms of schools it was if you had a group of people who wanted to know this then you had to come up with a solution. So I tailored it to new media and by the time I left I'd studied quite a bit and did my dissertation on it which was like 12 years ago and there weren't that many students who'd studied quite as hard as I had on new media. I was probably one of the first designers to come out of college with that sort of background as opposed to a graphics background or technical background (interviewee 18, interactive multi-media designer).

However, this is contrasted with certain further and higher education courses in the arts that seemed to be too generalist and not detailed enough for easy transferability to specialist markets.

... you go to university and they kind of give you a wide spread of skills and you kind of think I need a little bit more focus somewhere. Multimedia seems to be a catch-all term at the moment that gets people onto college courses and when they get there they can do a bit of HTML, they can do a bit of graphics but they're not really good at graphics or they're not really good at HTML ... and you then have to take two years to train them up to be really good at it (interviewee 18, interactive multi-media designer).

Having highlighted a number of technical inadequacies about certain higher education arts-based courses, many cultural entrepreneurs were also scathing about the extent to which these courses provided them with the appropriate business skills for a future business career in the cultural industries.

For God sake don't get me on education. It was neither use nor ornament in a business sense. There was just buggar all. The graphics course that I went back to was slightly better because it was more technically based, but in business terms, on how to survive in business – very little help. Most of the nous has come through either being fortunate, fate, or coming a cropper, learning things as you go along (interviewee 33, graphic designer).

It should also be noted, however, that “creative arts” courses by no means made up the majority of the educational backgrounds of cultural entrepreneurs.

An analysis of the Census of Population found that only one in five of those with cultural occupations, and only one in ten of those employed in the cultural industries, had “creative arts” qualifications (O’Brien and Feist, 1995).

It seemed that it was what entrepreneurs did as interests or hobbies during their higher education that provided them with initial inspiration for future careers. In some respects these activities provided them with authentic opportunities for developing informal social and technical skills that would assist future business start-up.

I actually did a philosophy degree at Manchester University, but all the way through that I was sewing, selling stuff (interviewee 14, fashion designer). The other things I was doing at university was running the sports pages, and to some extent the news pages of the paper ... particularly during the postgraduate years ... and running sports teams and the athletic union, and to some extent the students’ union ... and those things I think are far more relevant to what I do now than the actual substantive study of one thing (interviewee 1, digital and electronic arts).

Whatever this says about the relevance of such courses to cultural entrepreneurs, it certainly suggests that the attraction of the cultural industries is wider than for those with specific “artistic skills”.

Research undertaken by the Manchester Institute for Popular Culture on independent fashion designers in Manchester[4] found that 50 per cent had no formal training within clothing design, textiles etc. – though more had HE qualifications. What was crucial in their career entry was a commitment and enthusiasm for clothing design, and a close relationship with the relevant consumer or lifestyle groups, especially those associated with the “club” or “street scene” (Purvis, 1996).

In other words, the formative educational moment was to do with lifestyle experimentation, with a wider cultural orientation – one that was given by higher education institutions but not necessarily by the creative arts departments within them.

In summary, there are a number of issues that have been raised by our sample about the relevance or otherwise of FE and HE for a future career in the cultural industries:

- FE and HE arts-based courses can provide an initial inspiration and opportunity to experiment with artistic ideas.
- In terms of providing opportunities for individuals to follow an innovative route into the cultural industries, cultural entrepreneurs welcomed the chance of doing certain specialist art-based modules in more detail.
- Informal and work-based learning often seemed to provide more authentic opportunities for developing specialist and marketable arts based skills/techniques.
- Arts-based courses provided few opportunities, experiences and understanding of how micro and small businesses in the cultural industries operated.
- A minority of cultural entrepreneurs did arts-based courses. Many mentioned the opportunity of continuing with hobbies or developing other interests outside of formal

educational provision, but within an HE environment, as highly instrumental in guiding their career choice.

Experiences of business training and support

Having examined the formative FE/HE experiences of the cultural entrepreneur and their links to future work, our researchers then asked our sample about what business training and support they received either at the beginning of setting up in business or in the first stages of being in business.

Most of the sample highlighted business training and support received through the local Business Link or Business Consortium. However, for the majority of our sample the training and support provided by these agencies were often viewed as inauthentic and not linked to the real activities of particular cultural communities of practice.

The people who were giving you business advice, they said [we're] people who've ran their own business, they know what it is to run a business, but people don't know what it is to run a creative business. We'd have an accountant telling us – when we were desperate to open before Christmas – that no, we couldn't we hadn't got enough of a business plan. But we were saying “Christmas is the fashion industry, you can make all your money for the year ... if we don't get in now”. Then we had this business advisor who'd run his own business saying to us, “my wife she's into golf and you know she can't get golf clothes for ladies anywhere, that's a niche market, why don't you” ... and you know when it's something like that you don't really want people interfering with your creativity ... We wanted very practical information. We were two girls. We were shy and we wanted to go to wholesalers, fabric wholesalers, and we didn't know if we could go and get fifteen metres of fabric or whether it would be a hundred metres. We wanted someone somebody who could say to us, “we'll/I'll find out for you”. We wanted information about National Insurance and practical things ... I can't really think off hand but a lot of things. We just felt that the people there they'd failed in whatever job they were doing, and that this was an easy job for them (interviewee 31, fashion designer).

This was further emphasised by what was viewed as a lack of knowledge about how the sector and hence how individuals within the sector worked, leading to potentially inappropriate support mechanisms and training approaches.

It's that thing where people are trying to teach you something. They go through this whole process, but what you want is the end result and you want the quickest way to do it ... It was the same with the Enterprise Rehearsal, we were really busy, and obviously we had to go to the meetings, once a week, and we'd phone them and say can't go, we've been up all night sewing, one of us has to go to work, we've got this order to do, and they'd say you're going to get thrown off, you've got to be here and this was like a grown man! You know, come on think! I'm sure he had his reasons and stuff like but we were like getting our knuckles rapped ... we were turning up every week with money and cheques for him to put in a bank account. It's not like we're taking the piss, there's got to be a bit of leeway (interviewee 31, fashion designer).

Where business advisers knew the individual and/or the type of work they were pursuing, there was a much greater level of satisfaction. However, even in these circumstances there

was a feeling from entrepreneurs that they did not learn anything new, only having certain business practices consolidated by the advice given.

Interviewer: You don't have any formal training ... I'm about to though. Basically what I had to do is go on a business course with Manchester Business Consortium which allows you – its almost like the Enterprise Allowance really. I'm currently in the process of doing a business plan which is the right time really because I do need that. It's all right having certain skills, but I don't think I've got massive business skills. Interviewer: So you went to them? What sort of help did they provide? Oh they were brilliant. Basically you have an interview, they kind of assess you and your ideas and say right here's a business plan go away and do it ... they kind of go through it with you ... it was probably the easiest business plan I've seen ... ironically I'd met the man before. He'd come in to rescue Con's (previous business partner) business so he knew my background which made things easier, so basically I've got a business plan and that's got to be filled in. Interviewer – Have you learnt anything new from meeting them? Not anything necessarily new, its a case of going backwards a bit. I'd never done a business plan. I need to do a business plan, I can't initially get any funding or a grant which I do need (interviewee 24, creative consultant).

There were also indications that “traditional” business advice given was not always viewed as “ethical” and did not reflect the experiences and approaches that cultural entrepreneurs had developed over time – again providing evidence of a lack of “fit” between the experience and viewpoints of entrepreneurs and the advice provided by their advisors.

We get people giving us advice, and you know, loads of it was really good advice but just inappropriate for the time, like you know, people give you advice “you really ought to do that” and its like yeah, okay, fair enough but I'm too busy today to do that. Just before, we had a bookkeeper , initially doing the finances and then we employed an accountant and Anne and I had a days worth of financial training, just because we didn't want to look idiots in front of an accountant and we knew what we were doing financially but we just didn't know the term for it, we didn't have the qualifications. So we got a crash course of doing that, and that was all right, it was kind of useful, taught us some things that we didn't know, taught us some words, taught us some things we already knew about but at the end of the day some of it was just not useful. Traditional advice like make sure you pay people slowly, because that's good for cash flow; and we were saying to them well we don't believe in doing that because we nearly went bust in our first year because Manchester Airport bought a big advert off us and didn't pay us for eight months because it suited their cash flow, we nearly went bust because we needed that money and they were being stingy bastards (...) it helped because ever since then we've decided we'll pay our bills as fast as we can ... early on we decided that we weren't going to get hung up about not knowing the jargon and stuff and thank god because so much crap is talked by people who know the jargon but don't really know anything in practice, so we've never been worried by things like that (interviewee 16, journalism).

In summary most of the evidence from our cultural entrepreneurs about business support and advice provided by the different local agencies was generally negative.

- There was a lack of understanding of what the cultural industries were and how they operated.
- Advisors were often viewed as inauthentic and advice as inappropriate for the experiences and approaches adopted by cultural entrepreneurs.

- Business training and support was at times inaccessible and inflexible.

Effective business learning experiences

There were a number of activities, approaches, and situations that cultural entrepreneurs suggested were important and, in some case, vital for effective business learning.

Situated learning – learning by doing and doing it with others

In most cases effective business learning for cultural entrepreneurs was achieved through working out problems as they arose, through the everyday routine operation and organisation of the business, and, particularly, through making mistakes. As could be expected, these experiences were formative. Particularly in the early days, events and mistakes were recalled as defining moments when something was learnt, never to be forgotten.

... I learn by watching what's going on, I think that is fairly typical of people (interviewee 1, digital and electronic arts). ... learning the hard way just by making mistakes and looking at how things are made, and doing your own version of it, which is the way most people learn isn't it (...) I think you do learn by trial and error don't you really? I think that's the way that I learn best and quickest is to try something, look at why I've cocked it up and do it again a better way (interviewee 14, fashion designer).

Networking and the development of social and cultural capital

For many cultural entrepreneurs effective business learning was also about getting information and ideas through contacts, in other words by being fully immersed in the field both in a professional and social capacity. This resulted in a cultural awareness of how and why certain business ideas might work.

...I've met a lot of people ... a lot of really good friends, doing really interesting things. You just naturally get involved ... that's how it goes, everyone round here, they go "oh I know who can do that", or "Angie can do that". Through going to venues you meet people in the music industry and on the promoting side I think again people get to know you and they judge you ... so Jason approached me and said "do you fancy doing this tonight" ... if I had to melt it all down ... basically that's what it is, that's what got me into all those things. Communicating, being around, having ideas. It's being part of things really (interviewee 24, creative consultant).

Mentors

Entrepreneurs seemed to value the opportunity of having someone, a specific expert, or mentor figure, to support them with their daily problem solving needs. Others too, disillusioned with the possibilities offered by formal training agencies, had turned to specific knowledgeable individuals, accessed through personal contact, who possessed crucial skills deemed useful to the enterprise.

... years ago there was a guy at Pilkingtons, marketing director at Pilkingtons, who was just so switched on about how marketing worked, he had such a clear vision of it and everything, and we said to him, we really admire you and he just gave us his time for nothing, he said okay I'll come and talk to you and he talked to the three of us ... like a mentor I suppose, for

about eight weeks, twice a week, he would just say ... spilled his head out to us basically and he was in his late 50s and I think he just thought yeah okay I've kind of passed it on and he kick started a whole sort of change, that's when we changed and thought design consultancy forget it, we're not just going to be that we're going to be this (interviewee 13, marketing, design and advertising company).

To summarise, for many, business learning in the cultural industries seemed to be encapsulated by the following quote:

I think learning is actually a very delicate process, the more I go on the more delicate I think it is. I'm really nervous to put myself forward to be formally taught because I think the most valuable sort of learning is quite a gentle back and forward ... and yes it is about mistake making, it is about observation and a huge part of it is about reflective honesty. If I'd have done that in a different way how would this have reflected back? How would that have happened? ... you definitely learn by all the dramatic mistakes; [like] if we had disciplined that person properly we wouldn't be having to do that dramatic sacking now. When we look at staffing issues are the means as important as the ends? Is customer service the most important thing that we do? Are we treating everybody with the same respect throughout? All that, because of who we are, we have to be a reflective organisation to do with other things, it does help you to learn. The more I go on the more I think reflection is actually a very important element rather than rote learning if you like.

It is the process of "gentle back and forward", reflexive and reflective learning, thinking through and gaining wisdom from mistakes, in an informal and grounded manner that most accurately conveys the sense of learning specified in data.

Conclusion

A "naturalistic" way of learning is through the development of social and cultural capital and the implementation of andragogical and situated learning models.

In examining the factors that seem to help cultural entrepreneurs learn and then develop their business practice our evidence clearly points to a number of important issues.

- The opportunity to experiment with ideas and then specialise in particular aspects of their craft/art.
- The opportunity of working out how to do business in the context of solving real business problems that face individuals and then reflecting on these solutions – what in shorthand might be referred to as learning by doing and by making mistakes.
- The opportunity to network and to work with others, to copy, adopt/assimilate and develop ideas from within their community of practice.
- The opportunity of working with authentic mentors that had a sympathy for, and an understanding of, the socio-economic and cultural context within which cultural entrepreneurs operate.

What did not appear to assist business learning and understanding among cultural entrepreneurs were the following:

- Formalised training and support that was de-contextualised, abstracted and assumed the learner was operating in an individualised socio-cultural vacuum.

- A lack of understanding or sympathy from trainers/advisors about cultural entrepreneurs' specialised community of practice and its *modus operandi* and identity – including, therefore, a lack of understanding of the social and cultural capital required (Bourdieu, 1984).
- The lack of formative opportunities of working with knowledgeable mentors in micro and/or small businesses during an individual's formal education and training.

In attempting to make sense of these data and hence develop strategies that might improve the teaching and learning of entrepreneurship for the cultural industries, three key theoretical concerns appear to emerge from the issues highlighted above.

First, entrepreneurial learning in the cultural industries appears at its most powerful when entrepreneurs are “doing” and reflecting on “doing” business within their sector contexts. These data clearly reflect the writings of situated learning theorists who suggest that authentic learning generally only effectively takes place within a localised and purposeful situated context (Lave and Wenger, 1992; Seely Brown *et al.*, 1989; Suchman, 1987; Vygotsky, 1978; Engestrom, 1987; Leont'ev, 1978). In addition, critical forays launched by management development educationalist on these very issues also suggest that classic undergraduate, postgraduate and other VET business programmes do little to enhance real business acumen and real business skills, suggesting instead the need to make greater use of action learning theories and approaches (Revans, 1982; Pedlar, 1991; Mumford, 1996; Fox, 1997).

Second, the data clearly demonstrated that entrepreneurship in the cultural industries is not just about acquiring technical creative and business skills but it is also about the process of developing appropriate social and cultural capital (Coleman, 1997; Bourdieu, 1984) that comes about by being embedded in the networks of community of practice. In other words, that it is about the acquisition of a particular set of knowledges, understandings and behaviours which allows the person to operate in the cultural field with a certain expertise. But this social and cultural capital is not just about the formal knowledge transmitted by education and training, it is about a way of acting, a way of understanding and a way of conceiving one's self-identity.

We would argue, therefore, that many formal business training and support courses provided by external consultants are largely unhelpful – business knowledge that is actively used in business is actively derived and developed from the interactions of individuals within a purposeful domain of practice and hence is, in part, a product of the activity, context and culture in which it is developed and used. What we have seen is that practical business knowledge is not easily developed in formalised external training contexts away from the reality of a trainee's business experience and activity.

Third, the data suggest, and this is reinforced by other writings that examine SME training more generally (Arnall, 1999), that some of the teaching and learning strategies and practices being developed by HE, FE and other VET providers to support entrepreneurship and small business development are often based on traditional pedagogical styles that do not always meet the learning needs of adults. These traditional strategies stand in stark contrast to an established literature based on adult education that recommend an andragogical model of learning (Knowles, 1990; Brockett and Hiemstra, 1991; Houle, 1961) – a model that contains a life centred (or task/problem centred) orientation to learning, acknowledges the volume and quality of past experiences of the learners, recognises that adults have a self-concept of being

responsible for their own decisions and for their own lives; and that adults need to know why they need to learn something before undertaking it (Knowles, 1990).

We would argue that unless these three key theoretical concerns are given the emphasis they deserve, VET policies and practices created to enable and develop this sector of the economy will continue to have limited effect. What guiding principles and practice, therefore, are required for the development of a new approach to entrepreneurship education and training for the cultural industries?

1. (1) *Pathways to entrepreneurship in the cultural industries*. FE, HE and other VET providers need to develop, via appropriate city-wide and regional institutions, genuine links into the cultural industries sector through authentic outreach work and the placement of prospective entrepreneurs with mentors in the industry. With appropriate guidance and support from both mentors and education and training providers, prospective entrepreneurs will then be given an opportunity to learn by doing and reflecting on doing within a community of practice (Hartshorn and Parvin, 1999). The authentic context of the workplace and its embeddedness in networks also provides the individual with an opportunity to develop appropriate cultural and social capital as he/she starts to appreciate the habitus of working in the sector.
2. (2) *Support, guidance and training for cultural entrepreneurs during incipient and growth stages*. There is a clear need for educational and vocational training providers to develop an appropriate teaching and learning strategy and response that clearly links into the way of working and the way of learning that many in the cultural industries have suggested are appropriate to them. This may be done by encouraging educators and trainers to take a different approach to their training. As Fox has argued:

One way that trainers and developers could enhance and develop their professional role is by learning to do “field-work” inside communities of practice, learning to translate tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge. The skills for doing this are similar to those of anthropological field-workers. Such skills need to be learned “in the field” but initially with the help of more experienced ethnographers (Fox, 1997, p 34).

The development of more grounded, case sensitive and context specific training protocols may be one way towards overcoming the barriers identified between practitioners and support providers. The enthusiasm shown by our respondents towards more reciprocal notions of “mentoring” gives an initial indication that advice or training might best be provided through a more dialogic, discursive environment; a space of interaction where practitioners and situated learners can learn through the qualitative and reciprocal exchange of ideas in more informal settings.

Notes

1. The development of the Small Business Service, and Business Links and Business Consortia via local TECs are some of the ways that government has attempted to support the SME sector. In addition, RDAs now have a clear remit for developing a regional strategy for the support and development of key high value added, knowledge intensive SMEs.
2. The term cultural industries is necessarily wide and covers areas such as non-subsidised arts, audiovisual recording, publishing, broadcasting, applied arts, design

- (including graphic, furniture, interior), and sites of cultural consumption such as cafes, restaurants, clubs and associated microfashion businesses.
3. "Cultural industries and the city: creativity, innovation and competitiveness" part of the ESRC Cities: Competitiveness and Cohesion Programme.
 4. Manchester Institute for Popular Culture's report *The Cultural Production Sector in Manchester* (1999) was commissioned by Manchester City Council and North West Arts Board, in association with Manchester TEC and MIDAS, the City Pride area inward investment agency.

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